REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of this amendment and the following remarks.

The Examiner, in paragraph 2 of the Office Action, objects to claim 6 as being informal. In response to this objection, claim 6 has been amended to add "A" before *game machine* in line 1.

The Examiner, in paragraph 3 of the Office Action, has found claim 3 to be allowable but has objected to claim 3 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response to the Examiner's indication, claim 3 has been amended in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 1. The amended claim 3 does not include the limitations of claim 2 but it is submitted that the claim is allowable because of the features recited in original claim 3.

The Examiner, in paragraph 4b of the Office Action, has rejected claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Okada '785. The Examiner alleges as follows.

As per claims 4-5, Okada '785 discloses a slot machine capable of shifting and displaying symbols as shown in Fig. 1. In reference to Fig. 2, Okada '785 further discloses a random generator (25) that generates at random numerical values included in a series of integers ranging from "1" to "4096", a random number sampler (26) for sampling the numerical values generated by the random number generator, 3:28-48, a storage means (29) for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values, 3:49-50, 4:1-4; a stop control means (36) for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbols stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state, 4:5-49. As shown in element (29) of Fig. 2, Okada discloses different levels of winning states such as small win, middle or

medium win, big win and no win. As shown in Fig. 2, elements (22, 29) each winning state is associated with one random number in one game, thereby making it possible for small prizes winning states to be requested in one game unless big prize or medium prize winning state is requested. Unless a player generates a "7-7-7" or "bar-bar-bar" which is considered a big win and a medium win respectively, any other triple combination of one symbol will be considered as a small win which makes it apparent that a plurality of small prize winning states are changed in accordance with the game condition.

The Examiner thus contends that Okada '785 discloses, "different levels of winning states such as small win, middle or medium win, big win and no win", and "each winning state is associated with one random number in one game, thereby making it possible for small prizes winning states to be requested in one game unless big prize or medium prize winning state is requested."

In the game machine of the present invention, the ROM 32 may store a lottery data table as shown in FIG. 21 which includes, for example, small winning groups each associated with one of the random number segments in the regular game condition and BB regular game condition (page 32, lines 12 to 16). The ROM 32 is part of the storage means recited in claim 4. This means that the storage means according to the present invention is operative to store table data, like the lottery data table, i.e., table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining the random number segments, to be used by the winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number, and the table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states. In the specific described embodiment, the small prize winning group includes

(Okada '785

3 : 33¥

6   (09/643,685)

the "small prize" group constituted by "lower sun half", "upper sun half", "cactus", and "hat", and the "sun" group constituted by "lower sun half" and "upper sun half". In the game machine thus constructed, when the "sun" group prize winning state, for example, is requested in the regular game condition, "lower sun half" and "upper sun half" may be stopped and displayed on the upper and lower prize winning lines L2A and L1, respectively. In this manner, the game machine defined in claim 4 may determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless the big prize winning state or the medium prize winning state is requested (i.e., BB/RB inner winning game). The stop control means is operative to control the shift and display means to have the specified symbol mark, for example, constituted by said plurality of symbol marks, such as, for example, symbol marks indicative of "small prize" group constituted by "lower sun half", "upper sun half", "cactus", and "hat", or the "sun" group constituted by "lower sun half" and "upper sun half", stopped and displayed on one of the prize winning lines of the shift and display means when the small prize winning states are requested. This means that the game machine defined in claim 4 enables a plurality of small prize winning states, such as, for example, "lower sun half" and "upper sun half", to be concurrently requested in one game, and eventually "lower sun half" and "upper sun half" may be stopped and displayed on the prize winning lines concurrently in one game. The game machine thus constructed has an effect of providing a game player with more fun because of the fact that a plurality of small prizes may be won in one game with the stop button properly operated under the regular game condition, the period of which is actually much longer than the CT (challenge time) period.

(09/643,685)

The game machine disclosed in Okada '785 does not include and the patent fails to teach or suggest the concept of a small winning group which includes a plurality of small prize winning states such as the "small prize" group constituted by "lower sun half", "upper sun half", "cactus", and "hat", and the "sun" group constituted by "lower sun half" and "upper sun half". Accordingly the Okada game machine cannot concurrently request a plurality of small prize winning states such as, for example, "lower sun half" and "upper sun half".

Thus while the game machine disclosed in Okada '785 is similar to the game machine defined in claim 4 in the fact that the game machine makes it possible for small prizes winning states to be requested in one cycle of games (column 3 lines 38 to 48) the Okada game machine is different from the game machine defined in claim 4 in that the game machine of Okada enables only one of the small prize winning states to be requested in one game.

The present invention as defined in claim 4 is directed to the following aspects: (a) a game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random numbers divided into a plurality of random number segments; a random number sampler for sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by the random number generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining the random number segments; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using the reference values of the table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by the winning

state determining means, (b) the winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states, (c) the table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states, (d) the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless the big prize winning state or the medium prize winning state is requested, and (e) the stop control means is operative to control the shift and display means to have the specified symbol mark stopped and displayed on one of the prize winning lines of the shift and display means when the plurality of small prize winning states are requested.

Okada '785 discloses the aspects (a), (b), and (e) of claim 4 but it fails to disclose the aspects (c) and (d), i.e., "(c) the table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states, and (d) the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless the big prize winning state or the medium prize winning state is requested", thereby preventing, in the Okada system, a plurality of small prize winning states such as, for example, "lower sun half", and "upper sun half" to be concurrently requested in one game. Accordingly the game machine defined in claim 4 is not anticipated by the game machine disclosed by Okada '785.

Apparently with reference to claim 5, the Examiner contends that in the game machine disclosed in Okada '785, "unless a player generates a '7-7-7' or 'bar-bar-bar' which is

considered a big win and a medium win respectively, any other triple combination of one symbol will be considered as a small win which makes it apparent that a plurality of small prize winning states are changed in accordance with the game condition."

The game machine defined in claim 5 may determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for a plurality of small prize winning states to be requested in one game, and the small prize winning states to be concurrently requested in one game are changed in accordance with the game condition, and making it possible to notify the game player of the changeover of the game condition or presence or absence of the game condition flag (page 35, lines 13 to 18). In the game machine defined in claim 5 the table data may be a lottery data table as shown in FIG. 21, which includes, small winning groups <u>each associated with one of the random number segments</u> in the regular game condition and BB regular game condition (page 32, lines 12 to 16). Furthermore, the ROM 32 may store a lottery data table specific to a game condition. The ROM 32 is part of the storage means according to the present invention. This means that the storage means according to the present invention is operative to store table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining the random number segments specific to a game condition. The random number will be used by the winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sample random number and the table data, which includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states.

As shown in FIG. 21, the "lower sun half" and "upper sun half" belonging to the "sun" group may be concurrently won with the stop button properly operated by a game

player in the regular game condition while, on the other hand, in the BB regular game condition a plurality of small prizes belonging to the "small prize group" may be concurrently won. Thus the game machine, as defined in claim 5, may determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for a plurality of small prize winning states to be requested in one game, and the small prize winning states to be concurrently requested in one game may be changed in accordance with the game condition, and making it possible to notify the game player of the changeover of the game condition or presence or absence of the game condition flag (page 35, lines 13 to 18). The game player, who is made aware of the game condition in this way, may with more concentration select and focus on easy-viewable symbol mark(s) when he or she operates the stop button.

In the game machine disclosed in Okada '785, any triple combination of one symbol other than "7-7-7" or "bar-bar-bar" may be considered as a small win and small prize winning states, and the small wins may be requested in one cycle of games (column 3 lines 38 to 48). The game machine disclosed in Okada '785, however, fails to teach or suggest a lottery data table specific to a game condition like that shown in FIG. 21. In Okada a plurality of small prize winning states cannot be requested in one game, and the small prize winning states to be concurrently requested in one game cannot be changed in accordance with the game condition. This means that the game machine disclosed in Okada '785 cannot notify the game player of the changeover of the game condition or presence or absence of the game condition flag. The game player, not knowing the game condition or presence or absence of the game condition flag while playing the game machine, has less concentration to select and focus on easy-viewable symbol mark(s) when he or she operates the stop button. Thus, the

game machine disclosed in Okada '785 is similar to the game machine defined in claim 5 in that any triple combination of one symbol other than "7-7-7" or "bar-bar-bar" may be considered as a small win in the game machine disclosed in Okada '785 and small prize winning states may be requested in one cycle of games (column 3 lines 38 to 48), but the Okada game machine is different from the game machine defined in claim 5 in that the game machine disclosed in Okada '785 enables only one of the small prize winning states to be requested in one game and the small prize winning states to be concurrently requested in one game cannot be changed in accordance with the game condition.

The present invention as defined in claim 5 is directed to the following aspects: (a) a game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random numbers divided into a plurality of random number segments; a random number sampler for sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by the random number generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining the random number segments specific to a game condition; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using the reference values of the table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of the shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by the winning state determining means, (b) the winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states, (c) the table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one ore more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states, (d) the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number
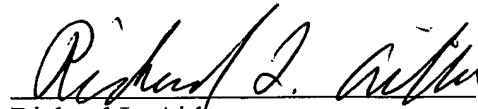
segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game, and (e) the plurality of the small prize winning states to be requested in one game are changed in accordance with the game condition.

Okada '785 discloses the aspects (a) and (b), but fails to disclose the aspects (c), (d), or (e) i.e., (c) the table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states, and (d) the winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of the random number segments of the random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for the small prize winning states to be requested in one game, (not possible in Okada), and (e) in Okada small prize winning states concurrently requested in one game cannot be changed in accordance with the game condition. Accordingly the game machine defined in claim 5 is not anticipated by the game machine disclosed by Okada '785.

In paragraph 4a of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Okada '604. In response to the rejection, claims 1-2 have been canceled. Claims 6-7 have been made dependent on claim 3 which should be found allowable as explained above. Accordingly claims 6 and 7 should also be allowed as being dependent from an allowed claim.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-7 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record and that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Aitken
Registration No. 18,791
VENABLE
P.O. Box 34385
Washington, D.C. 20043-9998
Telephone: (202) 962-4800
Telefax: (202) 962-8300

RLA/tam/mlp
DC2DOCS1:337790

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 3 has been amended to read as follows:

3.   (Amended) A game machine [as set forth in claim 2, in which], <u>comprising: shift and</u> <u>display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks, said shift and</u> <u>display means having prize winning lines formed thereon,</u>

<u>in which a predetermined set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on one of said</u> <u>prize winning lines cause a winning prize to be awarded to a game player, said predetermined</u> <u>set of symbol marks including a plurality of symbol marks neighboring to each other to form</u> <u>a specified symbol mark,</u> said shift and display means is partly constituted by a plurality of observation windows, and [in which] said specified symbol mark includes a first semi-circular symbol mark formed in the shape of an upper half of a circular configuration having a diameter approximately equal to the lateral width of said observation window of said shift and display means, and a second semi-circular symbol mark formed in the shape of a lower half of a circular configuration and neighboring to said first semi-circular symbol mark to complete a circle in cooperation with said first semi-circular symbol mark.

4.   (Amended) A game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random numbers <u>divided into a plurality of random number segments</u>; a random number sampler for sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by said random number generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference

values defining said random number segments; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using said reference values of said table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of said shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by said winning state determining means,

in which said winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states,

said table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states,

said winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of said random number segments of said random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for said small prize winning states to be requested in one game unless said big prize winning state or said medium prize winning state is requested, and

said stop control means is operative to control said shift and display means to have [said specified symbol mark] a set of symbol marks representative of said small prize winning states stopped and displayed on one of said prize winning lines of said shift and display means when said plurality of small prize winning states are requested.

5.   (Amended) A game machine, comprising: shift and display means for shifting and displaying various kinds of symbol marks; a random number generator for generating random numbers divided into a plurality of random number segments; a random number sampler for sampling a random number from the random numbers generated by said random number

generator; storage means for storing table data having a plurality of predetermined reference values defining said random number segments specific to a game condition; winning state determining means for determining a winning state on the basis of the sampled random number using said reference values of said table data; stop control means for controlling the stop of said shift and display means to have a set of symbol marks stopped and displayed on the basis of the winning state determined by said winning state determining means,

in which said winning states include small, medium and big prize winning states,

said table data includes one or more random number segments respectively corresponding to one or more small prize groups each constituted by a plurality of small prize winning states,

said winning state determining means is operative to determine a plurality of small prize winning states associated with one of said random number segments of said random numbers in one game, thereby making it possible for said small prize winning states to be requested in one game, and

said plurality of said small prize winning states to be requested in one game are changed in accordance with said game condition.

6.   (Amended) A game machine as said forth in claim [1]3, wherein said shift and display means includes a plurality of rotation reels each having various kinds of symbol marks drawn on the outer surface thereof.

7.   (Amended) A game machine as said forth in claim [1]3, wherein said game machine includes a slot machine.